

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-12

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ADP-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-02

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R 281300 Z JUN 73

FM AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
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INFO AMEMBASSY AMMAN
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USINT CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY KUWAIT
AMEMBASSY LONDON
AMEMBASSY LONDON

C O N F I D E N T I A L TEHRAN 4582

BEIRUT ALSO POUCH USINT BAGHDAD

E. O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, IZ, IR

SUBJECT: REPORT OF RENEWED FIGHTING BETWEEN KURDS AND IRAQI ARMY

REF: TEHRAN 4108 (NOTAL)

SUMMARY: PRESS FOR LAST THREE DAYS HAS FEATURED STORIES OF
RENEWED FIGHTING IN IRAQI KURDISTAN BETWEEN IRAQI ARMY AND KURDS
WHICH POINT TO IRAQI ARMY IN INITIATING THE FIGHTING. OFFICIAL
IRANIAN SOURCES VERIFY THAT FIGHTING HAS BEEN RESUMED WHILE
SPECULATING THAT A NEW AND FULL- SCALE STRUGGLE BETWEEN THE KURDS
AND THE BAGHDAD REGIME SEEMS UNLIKELY AT THIS TIME. REASONS FOR
LATEST OUTBREAK ARE UNCLEAR. END SUMMARY.

1. FRONTPAGE HEADLINES IN TEHRANNEWSPAPERS FOR JUNE 26, 27
AND 28 PROCLAIM RENEWED OUTBREAK OF FIGHTING BETWEEN KURDS AND
IRAQI ARMY. CASUALTY COUNT INCLUDES 13 KURDS KILLED AND 22
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INJURED WHILE 5 IRAQI SOLDIERS HAVE DIED. FIGHTING IS REPORTED TO HAVE BEEN INITIATED BY IRAQI ARMY ATTACKS ON A NUMBER OF UNNAMED KURDISH VILLAGES.

2. KURDISH LEADER MULLA MUSTAFA BARZANI HAS REPORTEDLY WARNED BAGHDAD TO WITHDRAW ITS TROOPS FROM KURDISH AREAS OR FACE ALL OUT WAR. PLACES SO FAR MENTIONED AS SCENES OF FIGHTING ARE BABA ESMAIL, BEMO (OR BAMO), QALEH DIZI, HALEBCHEH AND KIRKUK, LATTER OF WHICH IS SAID TO BE COMPLETELY SURROUNDED BY KURDISH FORCES.

3. DURING JUNE 27 CALL BY EMBASSY OFFICIAL AT MFA, DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR POLITICAL AFFAIRS SOLTAN- HOSSEIN SANANDAJI STATED THAT IRANIAN INTELLIGENCE CONFIRMS THAT FIGHTING HAS INDEED BROKEN OUT AGAIN. HOWEVER, SANANDAJI APPEARED ON BALANCE TO DOUBT THAT FIGHTING OF LAST FEW DAYS PRESAGES A NEW GENERAL WAR BETWEEN KURDS AND IRAQI ARMY. THERE WAS CONTINUING BAD BLOOD BETWEEN KURDS AND BAGHDAD GOVERNMENT BUT ONLY NEW IRRITANT WHICH HAD COME TO SANANDAJI' S ATTENTION WAS RECENT ARTICLE BY WASHINGTON POST CORRESPONDENT JIM HOAGLAND (REFTEL) QUOTING BITTER REMARKS BY BARZANI AGAINST BAGHDAD FOR FAILURE TO LIVE UP TO EARLIER KURDISH- GLGOVERNMENT OF IRAQ AGREEMENT. SANANDAJI SPECULATED THAT BAGHDAD MIGHT HAVE DECIDED ON A DEGREE OF VIOLENCE TO DEMONSTRATE ITS DISPLEASURE AGAINST BARZANI.

4. COMMENT: IN VIEW OF IRAN' S WELL- KNOWN ANIMUS AGAINST BAGHDAD, IT MAY WELL BE THAT IRANIAN MEDIA ARE EXAGGERATING THE SCALE OF THE FIGHTING, ALTHOUGH IT DOES SEEM TO BE CLEAR THAT FLARE- UP HAS OCCURRED AND IS BIGGER THAN ANYTHING IN RECENT MONTHS. WE SHALL BE SUBMITTING A SUBSEQUENT REPORT.
HELMS

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